

## **APPENDIX E**

### **WAL-MART SUPERCENTER (ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS 291-460-004, 005, AND 009) BURROWING OWL HABITAT SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**DECEMBER 13, 2005**

**LSA ASSOCIATES, INC.**

December 13, 2005

Ms. Clara Miramontes, Senior Planner  
City of Riverside  
Planning Department  
3900 Main Street, Third Floor  
Riverside, California 92506

Subject: Wal-Mart Supercenter (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 291-460-004, 005, and 009)  
Burrowing Owl Habitat Suitability Assessment Report (LSA Project No. CTR530)

Dear Ms. Miramontes:

This letter report serves to document the results of a habitat suitability assessment for the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) by LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA) at the above-referenced proposed project site. The approximately 23.5-acre site is located northwest of Corporate Center Place in the City of Riverside, Riverside County. Specifically, the proposed project site lies within the USGS 7.5' *Riverside East* quadrangle, within portions of northwest ¼, northeast ¼, and southeast ¼ of Section 3, Township 3 South, Range 4 West (see attached Figure 1).

The field visit for the habitat suitability assessment was conducted on October 5, 2005, by LSA biologist Jodi Ross, who is the preparer of this report and the principal investigator for this study. It was determined the proposed project site does not support suitable habitat for burrowing owl.

## BACKGROUND

Burrowing owls are found in open, dry grasslands, agricultural and range lands, and desert habitats often associated with burrowing animals. They can also inhabit grass and shrub stages of pinyon and ponderosa pine habitats. The owl commonly perches on fence posts or on top of mounds outside its burrow. These owls can be found at the margins of airports and golf courses and in vacant urban lots. They are active day and night, but are usually less active in the peak of day.

Burrowing owls tend to be opportunistic feeders. Large arthropods, mainly beetles and grasshoppers, comprise a large portion of their diet. Small mammals, especially mice, rats, gophers, and ground squirrels, are also important food items. Other prey animals include reptiles and amphibians, scorpions, young cottontail rabbits, bats, and birds such as sparrows and horned larks. Consumption of insects increases during the breeding season. Burrowing owls are primarily crepuscular (active at dusk and dawn) but will hunt throughout a 24-hour period.

As their name suggests, burrowing owls nest in burrows in the ground, often in old ground squirrel burrows or badger dens. They can dig their own burrows but prefer deserted excavations of other animals. They are also known to use artificial burrows.

## METHODS

The site visit for the burrowing owl habitat suitability assessment was conducted on October 5, 2005, from approximately 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. by LSA biologist Jodi Ross. During the site visit, all vegetation types on the site were surveyed on foot. A list of plant and animal species observed is attached as Table A.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Physical Site Conditions

The proposed project site is situated in the northeastern portion of the City of Riverside. The proposed project site is bordered on the north and west by construction grading, to the east is Wal-Mart, and to the south is Corporate Center Place which is bordered by undeveloped land (attached Figure 2). The proposed project site is relatively flat and the elevation at the site ranges from 1,555 feet to 1,580 feet above sea level. A dumpster and minor debris are present on the southern portion of the site. Drainage features are present on various locations throughout the site. The proposed project site is highly disturbed due to recent grading.

### Natural Communities and Vegetation

Vegetation throughout the proposed project site is composed primarily of non-native grassland. Riparian vegetation also occurs along the drainage features present on the proposed project site. Dominant non-native grassland plant species identified include Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), short-pod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), dove weed (*Croton setiger*), and tarweed (*Deinandra* sp.). The dominant riparian vegetation was composed of Goodding's willow (*Salix gooddingii*), mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), and cattails (*Typha* sp.). Attached Figure 2 shows land use and vegetation. A complete list of plant species observed is attached in Appendix A.

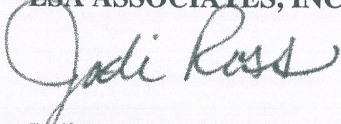
### Burrowing Owl Habitat Assessment

The proposed project site currently does not support suitable habitat for the burrowing owl. The site has been recently graded and is extremely compacted and, therefore, is not suitable habitat. No fossorial burrows were identified during the field visit; however, discing, mowing, and/or other ground disturbances of the site may present suitable habitat for the owl. Pre-construction surveys may be warranted in the event site conditions change.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

LSA ASSOCIATES, INC.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jodi Ross". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jodi Ross  
Assistant Biologist

Attachments: Figure 1 – Regional and Project Location  
Figure 2 – Vegetation and Land Use Map  
Table A – Plant and Animal Species Observed

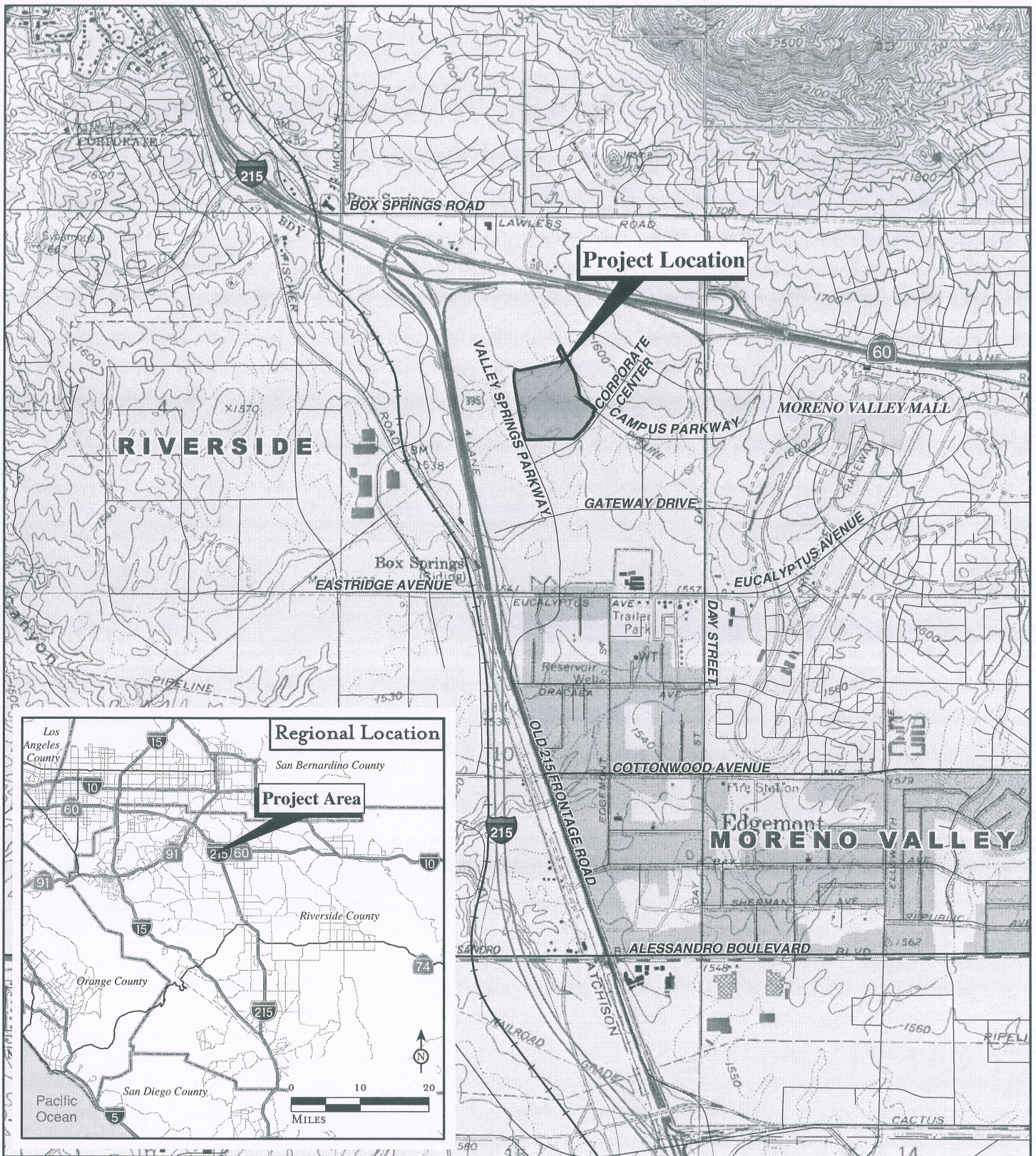
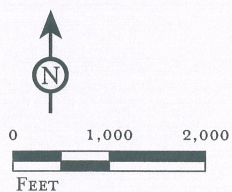


FIGURE 1

LSA



Wal-Mart Super Center at Canyon Crossings  
Burrowing Owl  
Habitat Suitability Assessment

Regional and Project Location

SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quad: Riverside East ('80), CA; Thomas Bros., 2004

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FIGURE 2

# LSA

PROJECT LOCATION

## VEGETATION AND LAND USE

ROUGH-GRADED NON-NATIVE GRASSLAND

RIPARIAN VEGETATION, FORMER STANDING WATER

DEVELOPED

DRAINAGE

FORMERLY PONDED WATER

PONDED WATER

Wal-Mart Super Center at Canyon Crossings  
Burrowing Owl

Habitat Suitability Assessment

Vegetation and Land Use Map

SOURCE: Eagle Aerial, 2004

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**Table A: Plants and Animal Species Observed**

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
<b>PLANT SPECIES OBSERVES</b>	
<b>Amaranthaceae</b>	<b>Amaranth family</b>
<i>Amaranthus albus*</i>	Tumbling pigweed
<b>Asteraceae</b>	<b>Sunflower family</b>
<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	Mule fat
<i>Conyza canadensis</i>	Common horseweed
<i>Deinandra fasciculata</i>	Fascicled tarweed
<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	Brittlebush
<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Common sunflower
<i>Heterotheca grandiflora</i>	Telegraph weed
<i>Stephanomeria</i> sp.	Stephanomeria
<b>Boraginaceae</b>	<b>Borage family</b>
<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i>	Common fiddleneck
<b>Brassicaceae</b>	<b>Mustard family</b>
<i>Hirschfeldia incana*</i>	Shortpod mustard
<b>Chenopodiaceae</b>	<b>Saltbush family</b>
<i>Salsola tragus*</i>	Russian thistle
<b>Euphorbiaceae</b>	<b>Spurge family</b>
<i>Croton setiger</i>	Dove weed
<b>Lamiaceae</b>	<b>Mint family</b>
<i>Trichostema lanceolatum</i>	Vinegar weed
<b>Polygonaceae</b>	<b>Buckwheat family</b>
<i>Polygonum arenastrum*</i>	Common knotweed
<i>Rumex crispus*</i>	Curly dock
<b>Salicaceae</b>	<b>Willow family</b>
<i>Populus fremontii</i>	Western cottonwood
<i>Salix gooddingii</i>	Goodding's willow
<b>Tamaricaceae</b>	<b>Tamarisk family</b>
<i>Tamarix ramosissima*</i>	Mediterranean tamarisk
<b>Cyperaceae</b>	<b>Sedge family</b>
<i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>	Tall flatsedge
<b>Typhaceae</b>	<b>Cattail family</b>
<i>Typha</i> sp.	Cattail
<b>ANIMALS OBSERVED</b>	
<b>AVES</b>	<b>BIRDS</b>
<b>Accipitridae</b>	<b>Kites, Hawks, and Eagles</b>
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Red-tailed hawk

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**

**Tyrannidae**

*Sayornis nigricans*

**Emberizidae**

*Pipilo maculatus*

**MAMMALIA**

**Leporidae**

*Sylvilagus audubonii*

\*Non-native species

**COMMON NAME**

**Tyrant Flycatchers**

Black phoebe

**Emberizines**

Spotted towhee

**MAMMALS**

**Rabbits and Hares**

Desert cottontail